Vision Statement

To enhance and promote research, learning, extension, outreach, service, and clinical activities at the University of Florida through the creation of a geospatially-integrated university.

Mission Statement

To develop a plan to make UF a geospatially-integrated university, where geospatial science, thinking, and visualization are broadly applied across disciplines and are supported through readily accessible and high capacity computing infrastructure, training, and expertise.

Goals

The Geospatial Task Force comprises faculty, staff, and researchers who are developing a plan to promote and enhance geospatial activities at the University of Florida. The Task Force is inventorying current UF geospatial research, expertise, and curriculum, assessing campus geospatial needs, and exploring partnerships in an effort to better understand how to achieve our vision. A geospatially-integrated university supports research, learning, extension, outreach, service, and clinical activities through implementation of the following goals.

Goals:

- Easy access to software and data
- Relevant curriculum across disciplines
- Access to computational infrastructure
- Access to expertise for assistance
- A permanent steering committee to represent the geospatial interests from across the University community and facilitate the work of faculty, staff and students through a framework for collaboration

Background

UF holds a wealth of expertise in Geospatial Science and Technology.[1] Over the past 30 years the geospatial field has grown from a highly specialized technology in a few departments to a field widely applied across the University. The use of the geospatial technology for spatial analysis, critical thinking, and informed decision making has proven valuable to tackle current issues across disciplines. Geospatial technology is used in over 40 academic units from 11 colleges, as well as UF Information Technology, UF Administrative Units (Campus Planning, UPD, Office of Institutional Planning and Research, and the UF Foundation Research Department), UF Libraries, and the Florida Museum of Natural History. The growth of the geospatial field at UF has correlated with the growth of the geospatial industry at-large.

Geospatial technology is listed by the U.S. Department of Labor as one of its 14 high-growth, high-demand industries.

While geospatial work is widespread at UF, it is also decentralized, with each of the 40+ academic units engaging in their own geospatial research, teaching, and service. There is currently no centralized infrastructure to support the software and hardware foundation underlying geospatial technologies.

With the phenomenal investment the University has chosen to make in information technology hardware, software and human resources, we think we are poised to become a global leader in geospatial science. We simply need to marshal our resources and capabilities in an integrated and purposeful way. A few key initiatives within UF Information Technology offer the campus geospatial community possible collaboration and support for their IT infrastructure needs:

- Research Computing: provide high capacity computing, physical hosting for data storage, visualization, and distribution.
- UFApps: provide global access to geospatial software, with no need for desktop installation. Assist with site license costs and administration.

The ability to utilize these existing UF IT initiatives could save individual researchers tens of thousands of dollars in hardware purchase and maintenance costs and IT personnel to manage the infrastructure. A coordinated campus effort to leverage existing geospatial knowledge, data, and software would enhance and attract geospatial-related research dollars and encourage UF to become a leader in training for the geospatial industry.

[1] "Examples of what Geospatial Science & Technology entail are from Dibase et al. (2006) and include the following knowledge areas: analytical methods, cartography and visualization, conceptual foundations, design aspects, data modeling, data manipulation, geocomputation, geospatial data, Geographic Information Science & Technology and society, and organizational and institutional aspects. (DiBiase, David, DeMers, M., Johnson, A., Kemp, K., Luck, A.T., Plewe, B., and Wentz, E.,2006, *Geographic Information Science & Technology Body of Knowledge*, Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers).